DEVIL'S REIGN CHAPTER SIX

MARVEL COMICS

TOP COW COMICS

image

WITCHBLADE / ELEKTRA

MARCH

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In loving memory of Mark Gruenwald

DEVIL'S REIGN

CHAPTER SIX

TOP COW PRODUCTIONS

MARVEL COMICS

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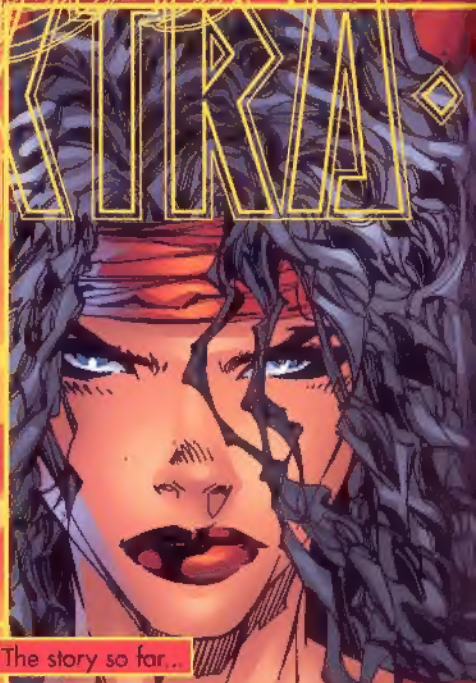


The story so far..

Mephisto has come to Top Cow's dimension, bent on acquiring souls to make himself more powerful in his new home. Unfortunately for him, some of Marvel's heroes have gotten to this world, as well, and they're trying to stop Mephisto before it's too late. One such hero is Wolverine, who quickly realized this battle would be too much for him, alone. Now, with the help of adversary-turned-ally, Sara Pezzini, Wolverine is trying desperately to hold off Mephisto until reinforcements arrive. Mephisto just wants his and Sara's souls...and it looks like he's going to get them...

WHY? WHY, WHY, WHY?
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!
A FEW MINUTES AGO, MEPHISTO--HA, HIS NAME IS MEPHISTO--NEARLY HAD ME CONVINCED THAT THE PAST FEW WEEKS,--THAT MY WHOLE LIFE WITH THE WITCHBLADE, WAS A FABRICATED EVENT!
FOR JUST A WHILE-- A DAMNED LITTLE WHILE, I WAS NORMAL--
--WHOLE--
--AND I LIKED IT!!
I LOVED IT.
I LOVED IT.
PLEASE, MAKE THIS THE DREAM...
NO, SARA PEZZINI, THIS IS NO DREAM.
I'M THE ONE YOU LEARNED ABOUT IN SUNDAY SCHOOL. THAT OTHER ONE, THE ONE YOU SEEM TO BE BEGGING TO IN YOUR HEAD--
--CAN'T HEAR YOU DOWN HERE!
WOLVERINE! IS HE SERIOUS?
WHO IS HE REALLY?!?
DARLIN', HE MAY NOT BE THAT DEVIL HE FANCIES HIMSELF TO BE, BUT HE'S A TOUGH 'UN, NONETHELESS!
ENOUGH! UNLIKE YOU, IN YOUR FRAIL LITTLE MEANINGLESS LIVES, I HAVE A SCHEDULE TO KEEP!
WOLVERINE, WHAT'S GOING ON?
I'VE ALREADY SPENT ENOUGH TIME TRYING TO SECURE YOUR PRECIOUS SOUL, SARA. IT'S TIME TO COOPERATE. YOUR FATHER WOULD WANT IT THAT WAY.
--WHAT'S THIS?!?
I THINK THE CAVALRY JUST ARRIVED.

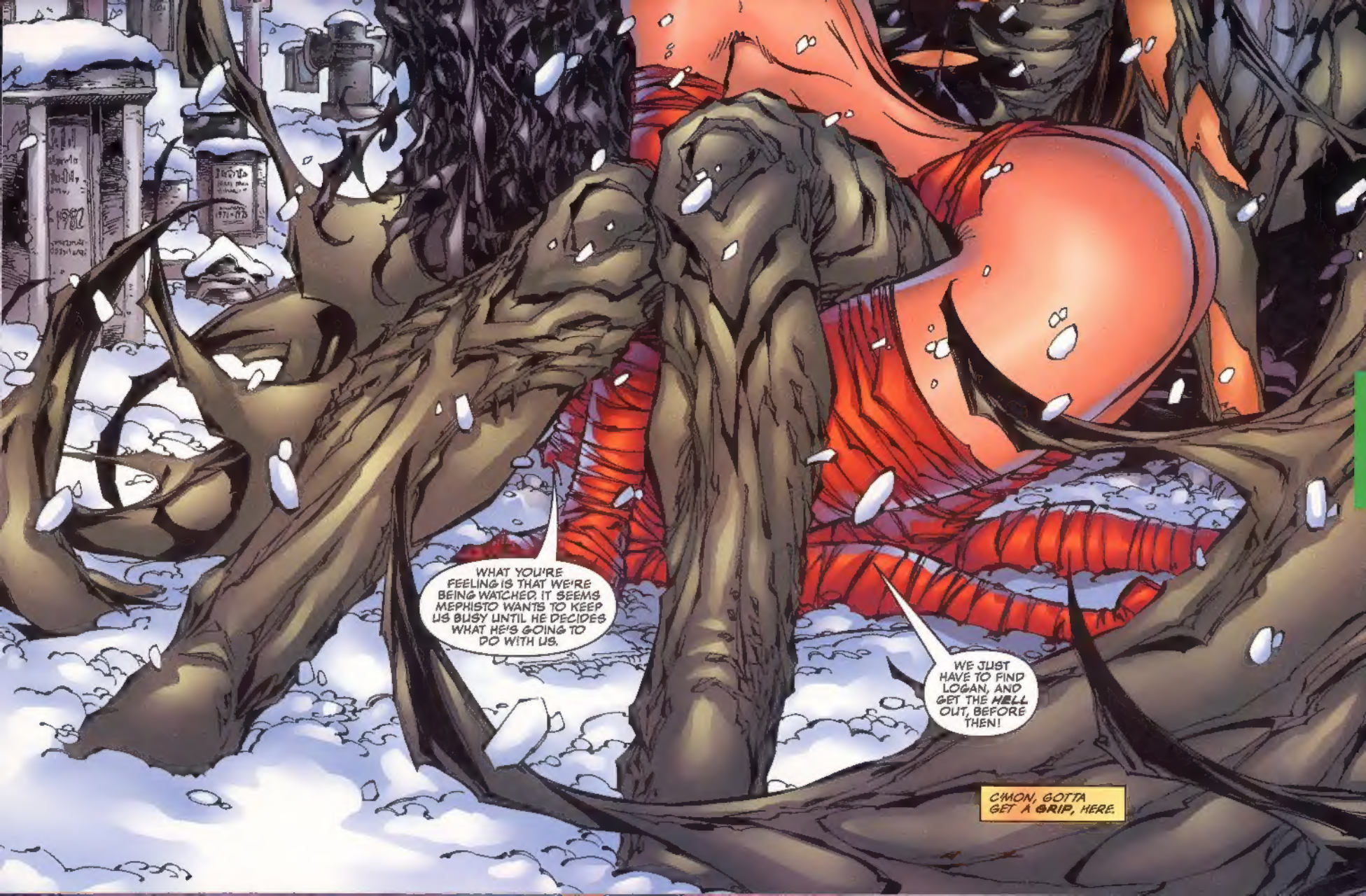
IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING, LOGAN.
WITH A NAME LIKE **WOLVERINE**, I CAN'T IMAGINE WHERE HE CAME FROM, BUT I'M GLAD HE'S ON **MY SIDE**.
HE MAY **LOOK** STRANGE, BUT COMPARED TO MEPHISTO, HE'S THE ONLY SHRED OF SANITY I CAN HANG ON TO.
AND IF **HE** SAYS THIS WOMAN IS THE CAVALRY, I'LL BELIEVE HIM.
ELEKTRA-- ZOE SENT YOU?
YES, EVIDENTLY YOUR **ASSOCIATES** WERE BUSY.

WOLVERINE, IS--IS SHE-- WITH US?
UH-- SORT OF...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SORT OF, LOGAN? HOW DARE YOU SPEAK THAT WAY OF YOUR SENSEI?!?
HAHAHA, HOW TRITE OF YOU HUMANS--ARGUING AMONGST YOURSELVES AS YOUR WORLD SHATTERS!!!

KRAGH!
DOESN'T MATTER, ANYWAY--I'M HERE FOR GETTING YOU AND YOUR FRIEND BACK THROUGH THE GATEWAY.
AHH!
LITTLE WOUNDED ASSASSIN--YOU THINK IT'S THAT EASY?
AH, LOGAN. LET'S BEGIN THIS EXCERCISE WITH YOU. I DON'T PARTICULARLY NEED YOUR SOUL. HAHAH, WE ALL KNOW THAT, DON'T WE?
NO!!!
OH, MY GOD!!!
IT'S AN ILLUSION. THAT'S MEPHISTO'S GAME. WOLVERINE CAN FIGHT IT IF HE FOCUSES PROPERLY--
--OH, BUT MY SWEET WARRIOR, YOU AND I KNOW IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE...!

...WHEN THE ILLUSION BECOMES REAL. YOU TRULY DO UNDERESTIMATE ME IF YOU THINK I'M MERE PHANTASM!
'LEKTRA, SARA-- GET OUTTA HERE!
LOGAN!
THIS PLACE-- LOOK OUT!!
HA HA HA!
NO! WE HAVE TO SAVE--
PROTECT.
HA HA HA!
PLEASE-- WE NEED TO--
PROTECT.
YOU SPEAK OF MY GAME, ELEKTRA...

"...NOW IT CAN TRULY BEGIN!"
I FEEL SOMETHING.
YES. YOU OBVIOUSLY HAD SOME SORT OF POWER BEFORE--I COULD TELL BY THE WINGS--BUT HERE, IN MEPHISTO'S WORLD, YOUR SENSES ARE HEIGHTENED.
A GIFT HE GAVE US. PART OF HIS GAME. I'M HOPING WE'LL BE ABLE TO USE THEM TO GET BACK TO WOLVERINE.
HOW DID YOU--??
IT'S SO COLD.
NO. YOU MUST BLOCK IT OUT. IT'S ANOTHER ILLUSION. TRY.
WE HAVE TO GET OUR BEARINGS. TRY TO FIGURE OUT WHERE WE ARE.


WHAT YOU'RE FEELING IS THAT WE'RE BEING WATCHED. IT SEEMS MEPHISTO WANTS TO KEEP US BUSY UNTIL HE DECIDES WHAT HE'S GOING TO DO WITH US.
WE JUST HAVE TO FIND LOGAN, AND GET THE HELL OUT, BEFORE THEN!
C'MON, GOTTA GET A GRIP, HERE.

SARA, I CAN FEEL PSYCHIC ENERGY ALL AROUND YOU--PULSATING LIKE A TIDE. WHAT IS IT THAT YOU...AND THAT... WEAPON...DO?
I... I'M NOT SURE.
WELL, YOU'D BETTER FIGURE IT OUT!!
LOOK ABOVE!
I WILL NOT BE HURT, ANYMORE.
KRAK!
AGGHH!
SPARE NO ONE AND MAKE IT QUICK, SARA. THIS IS NOT AN ILLUSION!
THIS IS TOO SURREAL.
SARA, FIGHT! FIGHT!!

YOU MUST DESTROY ALL WHO POSE A THREAT TO YOUR LIFE, SARA!
YOU SHOW NO WEAKNESS BECAUSE--
--GIVEN--
SLASH!
AGGHH!
--THE OPPORTUNITY--
--THEY WILL TAKE YOU FROM BEHIND AND END YOUR LIFE JUST AS QUICKLY IN AN ACT OF SENSELESS HORROR!
AND WHO, YOU MIGHT...SPANTS ...ASK, DETERMINES SENSELESS FROM ASSUMED AND DESERVING?
I DO!
WELL, I CAN SIT AND GO CRAZY THINKING ABOUT WHERE I AM AND WHO THIS MAD WOMAN IS, OR I CAN ACT!
SHOOOSH
THAT FEELS BETTER!
DREAM OR NOT, WHAT SHE SAYS MAKES SENSE.

PERHAPS YOU HAVEN'T HAD A TASTE OF THIS TYPE OF BRUTALITY--
BUT WITH YOUR "GIFT"!-- YOU CAN EXPECT A LIFETIME OF PAIN.
I SHOULD KNOW.
I LIVED THROUGH ENOUGH OF IT TO KNOW!
SHE'S SO.. EFFICIENT
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.

WANDERING. LIKE WE HAVE ANY IDEA WHERE TO GO FIND WOLVERINE...
UP OVER THERE. I SAW A LIGHT BEFORE WE GOT AMBUSHED.
A CAVE.
A TRAP.
REGARDLESS, WE MUST ENTER. MEPHISTO'S MOTIVE IS TO THROW US OFF BALANCE--TO CONFUSE AND TIRE US SO MUCH THAT WE LOSE CONFIDENCE.
SARA, I HAVE NOT PROPERLY INTRODUCED MYSELF. I AM ELEKTRA.
AND IF YOU HAVE BEEN BROUGHT INTO THIS MESS THE DISJOINTED WAY IN WHICH MEPHISTO IS KNOWN TO DO...
...I AM SURE YOU ARE ALREADY VERY, VERY CONFUSED.
YES. VERY MUCH SO.
MY WORLD IS NOT ACQUAINTED WITH MAGIC OR PARALLEL DIMENSIONS.
THEN HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN YOUR WEAPON? AND DON'T MANY WHO SEE IT MARVEL AT IT?
NO. IT WITHDRAWS, IN A WAY. WHEN I FEEL, OR WHEN IT FEELS, I NEED IT, IT TRANSFORMS.
WELL, HOW LUCKY FOR YOU.

WHAT TYPE OF CATHEDRAL IS THIS?
AND WHY UNDERGROUND?
MAYBE THIS IS ACTUALLY REAL.
PROBABLY NOT, SARA.
I AM GOD'S VISION AND GOD'S EARS, SO THROUGH THE HARVEST OF MY YEARS...
I AM THE [redacted] AND THE SOWN, GOD'S SELF--- MY CREATION AND YOUR OWN!
WHAT IS HE TALKING ABOUT?
A SACRIFICE IS TO BE MADE!
THIS IS NONSENSE!
IT IS TIME TO GIVE YOUR LIFE FOR ME!
FOR WHAT IS THE [redacted] WHO IN THE NAME OF ALL THAT IS HOLY AND PURE WOULD GIVE THEIR SOULD TO AN [redacted]?

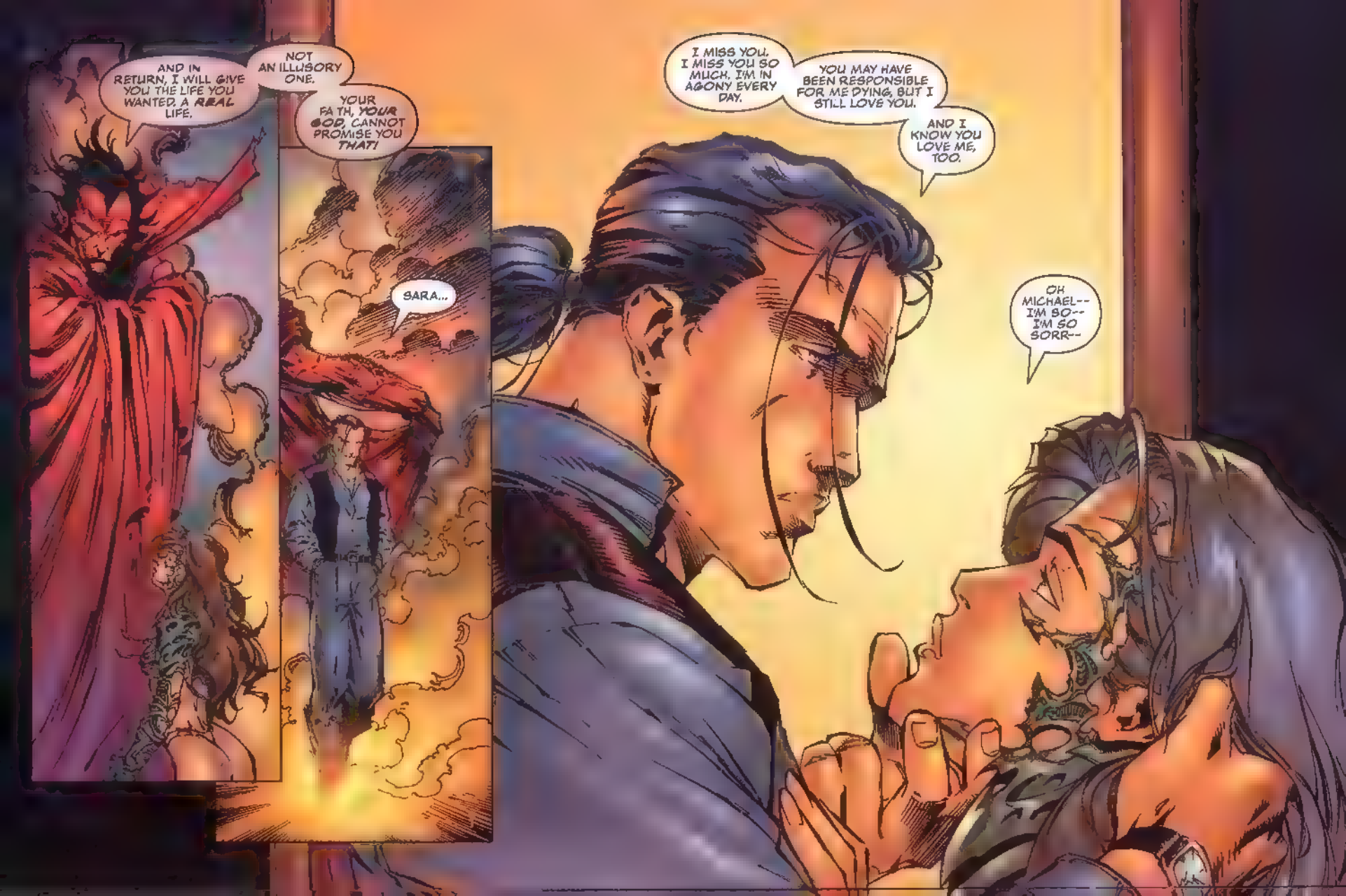
IT'S CALLED FAITH!
SARA!
EH? YOU SPEAK OF FAITH? OR IS THAT ONLY WHEN IT'S CONVENIENT FOR YOU TO HAVE RELIGION, SARA??
HOW DARE YOU!
THIS ISN'T THE TIME FOR THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSIONS, SARA. DON'T PLAY HIS GAME!
I'LL STOP HIM BEFORE HE DOES ANY HARM.
WAIT!
ELEKTRA, I WANT TO SPEAK TO HIM!
RRUMBLE!
TO TELL HIM THAT--
--MY FAITH COMES NOT FROM AN ICON--
--BUT FROM EXPERIENCE!
MY RELIGION MAY ALLOW ME TO PUT THE FEELINGS INTO WORDS, BUT IT'S MY HEAD, AND MY HEART, THAT PUTS THOSE BELIEFS INTO ACTION!
KRASH!
SUCH AN UNTAINTED PURE SOUL--
--IS WORTH HAVING!

AAHH!
HELP US--- WE HAVE NO SOUL--
GIVE US--
YOURS!!
SSHK
ELEKTRA, DON'T KILL THEM-- THEY'RE INNOCENT! THAT'S WHAT HE WANTS!
THEY'RE BETTER OFF DEAD!
NO! DON'T YOU SEE, THAT'S HIS AIM! HE WANTS US TO GIVE IN TO HIS WAY
IF WE KILL THESE INNOCENT SOULS, HE WINS.
I KNOW YOU FIND RAPTURE IN KILLING, THAT IS YOUR WAY. BUT I HAVE BEEN TRAINED NOT TO DAMAGE BEYOND THE NECESSARY MEANS.
IT IS MY WAY!
I DO NOT AGREE, BUT I UNDERSTAND.
ENOUGH!!!

FACE YOUR MAKER, SARA!! IT IS I!!!

I AM THE ONE WHO LISTENS TO YOUR DREAMS. YOUR SICK FANTASIES--WHEN YOUR RELIGION BETRAYS YOU, I AM THE ONE WHO STANDS BESIDE YOU!
OH, DOES THAT STRIKE A TENDER SPOT IN YOU, DEAR?

NOT TO WORRY, YOU HAVE NO SECRETS, HERE.
YOU ARE PRIVILEGED TO HAVE BEEN SOUGHT BY ME!
JOIN ME, SARA..
I AM THE ONLY WHO CAN HELP YOU--WHO WON'T ABANDON YOU LIKE YOUR FATHER DID.
DAD...


AND IN RETURN, I WILL GIVE YOU THE LIFE YOU WANTED. A REAL LIFE.
NOT AN ILLUSORY ONE.
YOUR FATH, YOUR GOD, CANNOT PROMISE YOU THAT!
SARA...
I MISS YOU. I MISS YOU SO MUCH. I'M IN AGONY EVERY DAY.
YOU MAY HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR ME DYING, BUT I STILL LOVE YOU.
AND I KNOW YOU LOVE ME, TOO.
OH MICHAEL-- I'M SO-- I'M SO SORR--

STOP! IT'S NOT R--!
OH, BE QUIET!

OH, WHAT YOU PROMISE IS SO TEMPTING.
TELL ME MORE, SARA...
YOU OFFER ME SOMETHING SO SPECIAL...
...BUT SHE'S RIGHT.
IT'S NOT REAL.
NO. I WASN'T RESPONSIBLE FOR MICHAEL'S DEATH!
YOU CAN'T GUILT ME INTO THAT ONE.
DO YOU REALLY THINK I'M THAT INSECURE? THAT AFRAID OF REAL LIFE? AFRAID OF MY LIFE?
I MAY NOT KNOW EVERYTHING I NEED TO IN LIFE, BUT I KNOW THAT ANY REALITY IS BETTER THAN LIVING A MESSED-UP FABRICATION.
OH, AND IF YOU WERE THERE DURING MY SUPPOSED SICK FANTASIES, WHY DIDN'T YOU COME TO ME BEFORE, WHEN I WAS WEAKER, MORE DESPERATE?
YOU AREN'T THE DEVIL.
YOU'RE JUST SOMEONE WHO NEEDS TO NAME DROP TO GET ANYTHING ACCOMPLISHED, YOU FRAUD!
ENOUGH ALREADY! I DO NOT NEED TO BEG FOR YOUR SOUL.
IN TIME YOU WILL GLADLY GIVE IT TO ME.
WITCH.
GO AWAY!!
NOW!!

OHHHH. THESE STUPID PEOPLE! DON'T THEY SEE WHAT I OFFER THEM?
THEY CAN HAVE THEIR HEART'S DESIRE, AND THEY SHUN ME! INSULT ME!
ELEKTRA, YOU DON'T THINK I'M A FRAUD, DO YOU? HMM?
OH YES, YOU ARE A BIT INCAPACITATED, BUT I KNOW YOU AGREE.
AND YES, I THINK I'M ALL RIGHT, AS WELL.

AH, WELL. THE PLAN MUST CONTINUE.
MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE. I MUST BE OFF FOR A BIT.
I HAVE A WORLD TO CONQUER...

WHY WAS I EXPOSED TO THIS?
HAS MY LIFE JUST BECOME A SERIES OF TRIALS...?
ELEKTRA--
WOLVERINE--
--MEPHISTO?!?
...EACH STRANGER AND MORE DIFFICULT THAN THE LAST?
I DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO BLOCK THIS ALL OUT OR KEEP DISSECTING IT.. IT SEEMS EASIER TO JUST FORGET, BUT I KNOW THAT'S NOT GONNA HAPPEN.
.SIGH :...I'LL HAVE TO TELL JAKE ABOUT THIS.
YEAH, RIGHT.

IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING, LOGAN.

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